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The Future Role of the G-8 Global Partnership: Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction

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The G-8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP) is a vital international security and nonproliferation tool. It is the primary multilateral arrangement for financial commitments to implement and coordinate chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threat reduction activities on a global scale. Comprising 23 partners, the GP¹ is committed to preventing proliferators, terrorists, or other nonstate actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD). A GP working group meets four to five times a year to engage in a regular dialogue regarding the progress of initiatives supported by this key multilateral forum.

The GP also produces an annual Annex that details each nation's projects under the GP. Because the current 10-year, \$20 billion GP commitments will expire in 2012, it is time to extend the GP so it can continue building upon its successful efforts to combat the spread of WMD, their delivery systems, and related technology. Canada has proposed extending the GP as a deliverable for its 2010 G-8 presidency, and the United States strongly supports that proposal.

The Global Partnership Today

In 2002 the G-8 established the Global Partnership and pledged up to \$20 billion for ten years. The United States pledged \$10 billion to fund the GP, and will fulfill that commitment by 2012. Unlike many multilateral commitments, the GP is backed by funding pledges that are translated into real activities whose progress can be assessed over time. In this way, the GP is a vital mecha-

nism to help nations meet their global nonproliferation obligations. This includes those required by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540, which established, for the first time, binding obligations on states to develop and enforce appropriate legal and regulatory measures against the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery.

The world has changed significantly since 1992, when the US Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program was launched. In 1992 the threat was clear, and the global community faced an enormous challenge. New states created by the fall of the Soviet Union inherited its WMD infrastructure. Too much of this infrastructure was vulnerable to exploitation by proliferators or domestic and foreign terrorists.

This immediate and potentially dangerous situation had to be addressed quickly, without compromising international safety and security. By 2002, when the GP was launched, the need to continue focusing on the threat posed by the legacy material remaining in the former Soviet Union (FSU) was still urgent. The GP therefore decided to focus on destroying Russia's decommissioned nuclear submarines and chemical weapons.

But the GP's mandate recognized additional threats as well. At its 2002 summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada, G-8 members committed themselves to "prevent terrorists or those that harbor them from acquiring or developing nuclear, chemical, radiological, and biological weapons; missiles; and related materials, equipment, and technology."

While initially, and correctly, focused on Russia and the FSU, the GP anticipated projects in many other nations. Since 2002 it has become increasingly apparent that the threats we face are global in scale and that proliferation problems occur in a number of regions. Terrorist organizations, smaller and more diffuse than ever, still seek weapons and materials of mass destruction to further their political or ideological goals. When threats are global, the efforts to counter them must also be global. Without turning away from the needs in Russia and the FSU, there is a growing need to focus on other parts of the world where the threat of WMD proliferation also exists.

This year, the United States is supporting Canada's efforts to extend the GP. At the Nuclear Security Summit in April, President Obama called for a ten-year extension, with a broader scope and mission, and committed up to another \$10 billion toward new projects, including expanding our efforts to improve nuclear security to countries not previously eligible for G-8 assistance. The GP's role was highlighted in the summit's Communiqué and Work Plan. UNSCR 1887 recognized the important role of the GP in reducing the threat of nuclear weapons too.

Accomplishments and the Way Forward

The GP has focused on the destruction of Russian decommissioned nuclear submarines and chemical weapons, but it has accomplished much more.

These achievements include improvements in accounting for, control of, and physical protection of nuclear and radioactive materials; enhancements to nuclear, biological, and chemical security; safe storage of spent reactor fuel removed from nuclear submarines; more accurate detection of nuclear and radiological materials; and prevention of illicit trafficking through improved border security capabilities. The GP has also engaged and redirected scientists, technicians, and engineers who have WMD, missile, and related expertise to peaceful purposes, and provided enhanced training on nuclear safeguards and security.

In 2007, when Germany chaired the G-8, the partners assessed "the main achievements, lessons learned, and priorities of the GP," noting that the GP made a significant and practical impact by undertaking complex and technologically challenging projects. The partners also recognized in the Global Partnership review that "their coopera-

tion and future security are directly linked."² They concluded, "The GP must evolve to meet new, emerging threats worldwide if we are to prevent terrorists, other nonstate actors, and proliferant states from acquiring chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and/or missile capabilities."

At the 2008 Hokkaido summit in Japan, and again at the L'Aquila summit in 2009, the G-8 leaders agreed to expand membership in the GP. This is consistent with the principles established at Kananaskis in 2002, setting up the structure for the work of the GP. "[W]e will support specific cooperation projects, initially in Russia, to address nonproliferation, disarmament, counterterrorism, and nuclear safety issues."³ Future GP work, it is now agreed, should be driven by threats, wherever they exist. And for the first time, in 2009 the GP Annex of activities included efforts undertaken in states that are outside Russia and the FSU.

While the United States is strongly committed to completing projects under way in Russia and the FSU, we agree the GP should be expanded in a number of ways. The first is geographically, which has already begun. The GP should include any project funded to ensure chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons or materials do not land in the hands of proliferators, nonstate actors, and terrorists regardless of where they operate. In addition to the \$1 billion per year spent in Russia and the FSU, the United States allocates an additional \$450 million per year for threat reduction activities in other regions of the world. A number of other GP partners, including Japan, Australia, and the European Union, also fund related programs outside Russia and Ukraine. Down the road, the United States believes the GP can provide a valuable forum to help partners deconflict activities and determine ways they can jointly fund new projects around the globe.

In addition to expanding geographically, the GP must also grow in size. To meet the global threat effectively, the GP must expand to include new members and, in particular, look to add potential regional leaders. Many nations could be considered in such an expansion, especially those that attended the Nuclear Security Summit. Each has made commitments in the summit Communiqué and Work Plan, including taking steps to secure its own nuclear material and assisting other nations in securing material where assistance is needed.

Other nations may become more engaged in different areas, such as radiological security, biosecurity, export controls, UNSCR 1540 implementation, and scientist engagement. Although each member of the GP should assess and address those threats deemed most pressing, it is important to note all efforts and all resources that nations are dedicating to the area of securing weapons and materials of WMD.

Expansion of the GP will also allow partners to identify and respond to new threats. There are several significant, new areas of concern that the GP can and should address as it moves toward extension beyond 2012.

The first of these is in the area of nuclear and radiological security. The Obama administration recognizes the importance of securing all nuclear material, both civilian and military, regardless of where it exists. This was the driving force behind the April Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC, which kicked off a four-year global effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material.

Canada, the United States, the European Union, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and the Republic of Korea all have implemented projects to upgrade the physical protection of, and accounting for, nuclear material in Russia. In addition, the United States, Norway, Canada, Finland, and France have been working to recover and dispose of several hundred highly radioactive radioisotope thermoelectric generators from lighthouses in the Northern Sea Route, the Baltic Sea, and the Far East.

Future GP work includes fulfilling the commitments made at the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit. For the United States, this includes eliminating the threat by removing excess nuclear material from countries, as well as improving the protection of all nuclear material, including via risk and vulnerability assessments.

Other US commitments include converting and verifying the shutdown of research reactors and increasing the physical protection of radioactive materials that could be used in a dirty bomb. Long-term commitments include installing radiation-detection equipment at major seaports and land border crossings, as well as the ongoing training of security forces guarding fissile material. Training efforts also include the recovery, transport, and

secure storage of industrial and medical radiological sources that could be used in a dirty bomb.

The GP is also focusing on coordinated efforts to reduce the global biological threat, challenging in part because of the many forms it can take. One goal is to improve disease detection and surveillance, primarily developing networks that detect and monitor disease outbreaks that could pose a threat to international security. Another goal is to help nations respond to an infectious disease outbreak that poses a serious threat to international security. A third objective is to build a sustainable capacity for securing dangerous pathogens and improving laboratory biosafety. GP biosecurity efforts also seek to raise awareness of the threat to international security posed by dangerous pathogens. Efforts are being made to engage the G-8 and international community in these types of activities, and to find multilateral ways to work on them. The G-8 provides a foundation for promoting this goal.

In fact, the GP is considering specific projects for future funding in the area of biosecurity. Ideally, these projects will secure and account for materials representing biological proliferation threats. They will also develop and maintain appropriate and effective measures to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the deliberate misuse of biological agents. As a result of GP biosecurity projects, global networks to rapidly identify, confirm, and respond to deliberate biological attacks will be strengthened. The work of the GP will reduce proliferation risks by advancing and promoting safe and responsible conduct in biological sciences, while not impeding the pace of essential peaceful scientific research.

The GP is also addressing concerns centering on the expertise of former weapons scientists. Since the early 1990s, there has been a particular need to ensure that WMD expertise, or sensitive knowledge in WMD, not be used to increase WMD proliferation. In fact, much of the United States' Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction funding since 1992 has been dedicated to this task. Today this work has expanded far beyond Russia and the FSU to other countries and regions, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Indonesia, Malaysia, and most recently into Africa. The goal of increasing scientist engagement efforts is to prevent their knowledge from being diverted to proliferation and terrorist purposes anywhere in the world.

These efforts were highlighted in the 2009 “Report on the G-8 Global Partnership,” adopted at the L’Aquila G-8 summit. The G-8 partners noted that a coordinated approach in the field of global WMD knowledge proliferation and scientist engagement would enhance international collaboration and enable that cooperation to take place in an effective and more comprehensive manner.

Activities within the area of scientist engagement include developing a culture of responsibility among scientists and advancing life sciences/biotechnology. Identifying greater commercial applications for advanced scientific research is another key priority of scientist engagement efforts. Other activities could include establishing ongoing engagement between chemical and nuclear scientists and engineers worldwide. A greater effort could be made to form partnerships and establish regional centers of excellence and training hubs.

A key component to the success of all of these efforts is the ability, or capacity, of GP nations to implement them. Capacity-building work includes efforts to strengthen export controls and border security in support of UNSCR 1540. It may also include proposing new export control laws, implementing regulations, and licensing procedures, as well as greater support for export control enforcement. An essential piece of these initiatives is outreach to industry, which is necessary to securing private sector compliance for more successful implementation of export controls. Capacity-building efforts also include the development of national response plans in the event of nuclear smuggling incidents and providing legal assistance to develop laws for prosecuting nuclear smuggling.

The GP has also been expanding its outreach by welcoming cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention, UNSCR 1540, and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Without question, the work being done by these groups complements, in many ways, efforts by the GP, and through cooperative outreach efforts even greater threat reduction capacity can be achieved.

Conclusion

For all these reasons, extension of the GP beyond 2012 is necessary. The United States also believes such expansion of the GP should carry with it a greater scope. Global threats must be addressed

on a global scale, and the United States wishes to work closely with its G-8 partners in this effort. The Cold War legacy that led to the proliferation risks for which the GP was originally created have been a major source of global threat reduction activity since 1992. But like the world itself, these threats have evolved, and the United States stands ready to work even more closely with its GP partners and to welcome new GP partners so that we may continue addressing the serious challenges that confront all of us today.

Endnotes

¹ The GP consists of the G-8 plus Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, European Union, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and Ukraine (recipient only).

² The 2007 Global Partnership review also noted that the GP is a unique and successful G-8 joint effort. The GP has fostered trust and mutual understanding among partners and has contributed to a cooperative atmosphere in sensitive areas at local levels. It is also an international model for addressing the most urgent issues of international security and stability, including the evolving threat posed by the spread of WMD.

³ 2002 summit leaders statement.

The Stanley Foundation

The Stanley Foundation seeks a secure peace with freedom and justice, built on world citizenship and effective global governance. It brings fresh voices, original ideas, and lasting solutions to debates on global and regional problems. The foundation is a nonpartisan, private operating foundation, located in Muscatine, Iowa, that focuses on peace and security issues and advocates principled multilateralism. The foundation frequently collaborates with other organizations. It does not make grants. Online at www.stanleyfoundation.org.

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